



# C.U.S.C Learning to Train Manual

## U9-U12 Cobras

Table of Contents

Manual Summary..... i

Expectations ..... 7

    Technical..... 7

    Tactical ..... 10

Testing: U9-U12 Cobras ..... 15

Appendix A—CUSC Session Plans, U9–U12..... 19

# Manual Summary

## Intended audience

This manual is intended for individuals coaching competitive soccer players in the *Learning to Train* phase of the Long Term Athlete Development model (LTPD), which includes ages U8 – U12.

## Contents

This manual contains three parts:

### 1. Expectations

- **Homework:** individual homework exercises for Academy players
- **Bago:** keep away played at the start of training
- **Habits:**
- **Technical** expectations outline specific standards expected of Cobras in the Learning to Train age groups.
  - This includes concepts such as dribbling moves to learn, habits to enforce in the players, etc.
- **Tactical** expectations outline specific standards regarding tactical concepts that all Cobra coaches should adhere to, regardless of personal preference.

### 2. Testing

Juggling tests and standard scores attained by past cobra players.

### 3. Appendices

- Appendix A—Session Plans
  - Includes “staple” exercises for both technical and tactical development with which all players should become familiar during these ages.
  - A 15 session plan is also included for coaches who wish to use it.
- Appendix B—LTPD write-up





# LTPD overview

A great overview of the Long Term Player Development plan for the Learning to train phase can be found on the OSA website at:

<http://ontariosoccer.net/Portals/11/LTPD/Physical%20Literacy%20-%20Provincial%20Curriculum%20-%20LEARNING%20TO%20TRAIN%20-%20web.pdf>

## General Player Characteristics of Age Appropriate Development

Stage	Age	Characteristics
Active Start	U4	Players at this age have a very short attention span, they are very easily distracted. They all want to play with their ball, the toy. There is no sense of sharing toys, especially with strangers.
	U5	There is no ability yet for team play. As sharing is still an alien concept, passing the ball is not yet comfortable for them. They are only able to understand very simple rules.
FUNDamentals	U6	Able to understand very basic coaching info like stay in the area, attack in that direction etc. Learning through trial and error. Biggest challenge is learning to control the moving ball with their feet.
	U7	Players now understand that the game's purpose is to score more goals than their opponents. Still a lot of individual play.
	U8	Players' understanding that acting with the ball purposefully will lead to success is developing. Combining basic motor skills with ball control is now encouraged.
Learn to Train	U9	Now playing on a 7v7 field the understanding of team play, direction and opponent is developing. Optimum age to work on soccer specific techniques and skills
	U10	More and more understanding and feeling for teamwork. Understanding of playing without the ball (running off the ball) develops.
	U11	Perfect mental and physical ability for developing motor skills. Preference for specific positions becomes clearer. Developing an understanding of individual roles in relation to team.
	U12	Likes to compete and compare. Socially aware, critical of own performance and that of others. Ideal mental and physical condition in this age group. Imitates idols.

**FOR MORE DETAILED PLAYER CHARACTERISTICS SEE EACH DEVELOPMENT STAGE'S INFORMATION PAGES**

Focal points of LTPD in Learning to Train:

Take from OSA's Learning to Train document. You'll note that these guide the remainder of the manual, and CUSC's approach to coaching these age groups.

DEVELOPMENT STAGE	LEARN TO TRAIN			
TECHNICAL	U9	U10	U11	U12
Dribbling	1	1	1	1
Shooting	1	1	1	1
Running with the ball	1	1	1	1
Ball control	2	1	1	1
Passing	2	1	1	1
Receiving	2	1	1	1
Heading	4	4	4	3
Shielding the ball	3	2	2	1
Crossing	3	2	2	1
Finishing	3	2	2	1
1v1 Defending	3	3	2	1
1v1 Attacking	2	1	1	1

DEVELOPMENT STAGE	LEARN TO TRAIN			
PSYCHOLOGICAL/ MENTAL	U9	U10	U11	U12
Motivation	1	1	1	1
Self Confidence	1	1	1	1
Competitiveness	2	2	1	1
Concentration	2	2	1	1
Commitment	2	2	2	1
Self-Control	2	2	1	1
Determination	2	2	1	1

<b>PRIORITY KEY</b>	<b>1 = HIGH</b>	<b>2 = MID</b>	<b>3 = LOW</b>	<b>4 = NOT APPLICABLE</b>
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DEVELOPMENT STAGE	LEARN TO TRAIN			
SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL	U9	U10	U11	U12
Listening	2	2	1	1
Cooperation	2	2	1	1
Communication	1	1	1	1
Sharing	2	1	1	1
Problem-solving	2	2	1	1
Decision-making	2	2	1	1
Empathy	3	2	1	1
Patience	3	2	1	1
Respect/Discipline	2	2	1	1
Fair play/Honesty	2	1	1	1

DEVELOPMENT STAGE	LEARN TO TRAIN			
TACTICAL	U9	U10	U11	U12
Possession	2	2	2	2
Transition	2	2	2	2
Combination Play	2	2	2	1
Switching Play	4	4	4	3
Counter Attacking	4	4	4	4
Playing out from the back	2	2	2	1
Attacking Principles	3	3	3	3
Zonal Defending	4	4	4	4
Pressing	3	2	2	2
Retreat	3	3	3	3
Recovery	3	3	3	3
Compactness	3	3	3	2

DEVELOPMENT STAGE	LEARN TO TRAIN			
PHYSICAL	U9	U10	U11	U12
Agility	1	1	1	1
Balance	1	1	1	1
Coordination	1	1	1	1
Stamina	2	2	2	1
Strength	2	2	2	1
Speed	1	1	1	1
Suppleness	2	2	2	2
Acceleration	1	1	1	1
Reaction	1	1	1	1
Basic Motor Skills	1	1	1	1
Perception	1	1	1	1
Awareness	1	1	1	1

<b>PRIORITY KEY</b>	<b>1 = HIGH</b>	<b>2 = MID</b>	<b>3 = LOW</b>	<b>4 = NOT APPLICABLE</b>
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# Expectations

This section outlines various exercises, skills and habits that we hold our academy players accountable to. These are excellent for any level of player or coach to incorporate as well.

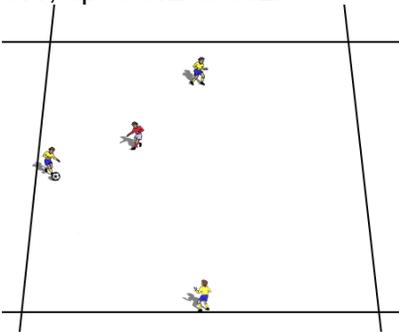
## Technical homework:

These exercises are expected of our Academy level players. Cobra and development league players can also participate in these exercises, and the exercises can also be incorporated into portions of your practices. The videos can be found here:

[http://www.cumberlandsoccer.com/Corner/playerscorner/index\\_E.html](http://www.cumberlandsoccer.com/Corner/playerscorner/index_E.html)

## Training:

As players arrive, our club would like to have a habit of having players play “Keep-away” or as we call it in Europe “Bago”. In a small square (10x10 meters) start with 3v1, 4v1, 5v1, up to 5v2 or 6v2.



### CUSC Bago Rules:

- Players on the outside try to complete as many passes as possible without the player(s) in the middle touching the ball.
- Whoever loses the ball, switches with the player in the middle.
- When 2 players are in the middle, whoever has been in longest comes out of the middle, regardless of which of the 2 defenders won/touched the ball.
- The first pass is always free.
- Every 10 passes we often give the defenders a quick exercise to do (ie: summersault) while the outside players continue passing.

Each training session is to include a minimum of 30 minutes of technical work (passing/receiving, dribbling, shooting repetitions)

## Juggling

Juggling means keeping the ball up with your feet or thighs without letting it drop. Players should above all work on their feet, and should not focus on juggling with their thighs nearly as much.

- Juggling standards are outlined in the corresponding charts noted in Testing on page 18.

**Individual Habits:** These are habits that players should learn at an early age, and incorporate in their game automatically while playing.

**Checking away** – moving/spreading out to create space before moving to the ball

**Communicating** – receiver asks for the ball, passer gives instruction (ie: man-on, Turn, etc.

**Looking around before you receive** – “check your shoulder”, know what’s behind you so you can make a quicker and better decision.

**Receive sideways on in the majority of situations.**

**Focus on your first touch being just the right distance away and in the direction that you’re going (first touch is moving).**



## **SAQ (Speed, Agility and Quickness)**

Minimum once per week, 10 minutes dedicated to speed, agility, and quickness exercises at maximum effort. These include:

- Full speed explosive exercises completed at top speed and quickness
  - From a practical perspective, there is only one consistent way to get young players to push themselves to their “top speed” and that is by making them race.
- For details, see the SAQ session on the Cumberland website and related video.

## **Dribbling**

Players are expected to dribble the ball with all major surfaces of both feet:

- Soles
- Outside of foot
- Inside of foot
- Laces

This is to be completed **each practice** as part of a warm-up or technical work.

Players are expected to become familiar with the following 1v1 moves (using both feet):

- Scissor (single and double)
- Step over
- Roll-Step-Over
- Elastico (outside-inside)
- Inside-outside (Mathews)
- Roll-Scissor
- Ronaldo Chop

Players are expected to become familiar with the following turns:

- Cutting away from players with both feet (inside of the foot and outside of the foot)
- Step over turn
- Cruyff turn

## **Shooting**

Players are expected to complete a finishing component once per week.

Players should be comfortable:

- Striking a dead ball with the laces of both feet

- Striking a moving ball with the laces of both feet
- Curving shots with the insides or outsides of both feet
- Striking straight and side volleys
- Understanding “composure” in front of goal
  - Includes how to look up at the goal keeper (GK) position and make a smart decision to finish.

By U11, players should have a well-rounded arsenal of shots. Players should be encouraged to demonstrate composure and creativity, using the right shot at the right time.



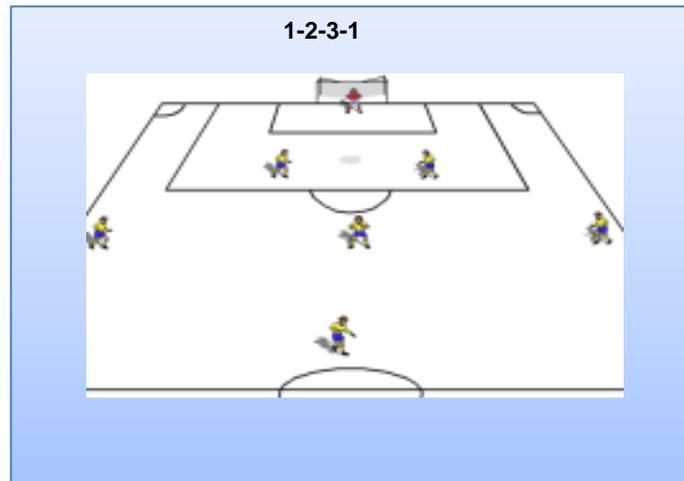
## Tactical

All tactics implemented are expected to promote possession with direction. Keeping the ball as much as possible, but going forward accurately whenever possible.

The following standards for formations, positional play and style are mandated by the club for U9-U10 players.

### 7v7 Formation

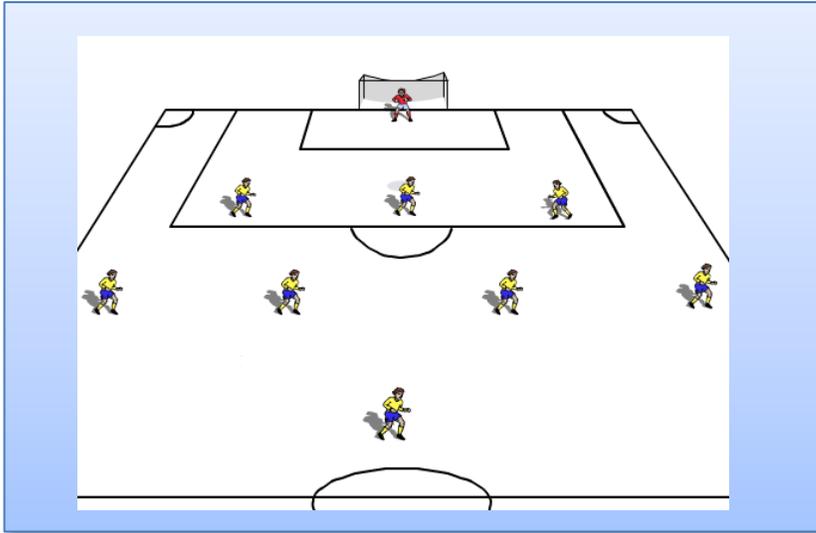
As a club we will aim to teach the game in a 2-3-1 formation (D-M-F)



#### Rationale for 2-3-1:

- Width and Depth are clearly provided
- A central midfielder with a clear task is in place (hold the middle)
- Defenders are expected to defend 1v1, as well as to learn how to cooperate as a defensive pairing, shifting side to side, and pushing up with the play.
- The GK is expected to be involved in the play and used to keep possession and switch the point of attack when appropriate
- The roles of each player are simple and clear:
  - GK saves, stays connected with the team up the field, and is expected to play almost as a sweeper when possible
  - 2 defenders defend together, and learn to pressure and cover for one another
  - Wide players provide width and get up and down the field
  - Center mid holds the middle, always shows for the ball and makes good angles to keep possession of the ball and move forward. He aims to switch the play often, or play forward when possible.
  - The striker provides depth and a central scoring option.

**9v9:** a 3-4-1 formation is recommended. Flat 3 back system, with 2 wide mids and 2 central mids (either side by side or one defensive and one attacking), and a single striker.



**Rationale for 3-4-1:**

- With 3 backs the player will learn how to stay connected as a back line, moving up and down and side to side with the play in line. Players are still asked to defend 1v1.
- With 4 mids there is ample width provided in our play, and 2 players are more able to control the middle of the field than formations which only use 1 CM.
- Strikers will be used to playing alone from the 2-3-1 formation used at 7-a-side.



## Other Tactical Considerations:

### Positions

Players will naturally have certain positions which they prefer. However it is expected within the U9 – U10 age categories that players:

- Play a minimum of two positions on a regular basis
- At some point throughout the season try each position

### Playing Style

A possession game with technical play is expected:

- Includes **both** passing and dribbling
- Dribbling is encouraged more so in the attacking third

**Note:** Players are **not** to boot the ball away under pressure at any time.

Players are expected to:

- Pass
- Dribble
- Shoot

**But** never to “kick” the ball in the general direction of the opposing team’s end.

Do not encourage a “great boot” from players in the back, and even the general term “kick” should be avoided.

**Reinforce this concept with parents.**

Goal keepers are expected to

- Look to pass or roll the ball to the feet of an open team mate
- Only punt the ball as a last option

**Communication:** A staple in all CUSC players will be their communication on the field. Every exercise, drill and game should include communication. This is to be reinforced continuously until it becomes automatic. The most basic commands should be:

- Turn
- Time
- Man on (don’t turn)
- Asking for each pass by name

## **Other Tactical Considerations**

Through U8 – U12, players should develop the following tactical understanding.

### **With possession**

Players progress from being able to retain the ball as an individual to being able to keep the ball as a team using triangles and diamonds (width and depth).

By U11 players are expected to understand the importance of wing play, and when to take players on as opposed to playing back to support.

In addition, players are expected to understand:

- Near and far post runs
- Support and how to create supporting angles in all areas of the field
- How to “switch” the point of attack from one wing to the other, and how to do so through the centre-mid or the centre-back
- When to play to feet and when to play into space
- Communication, including the use of “time” and “man-on” commands
- Overlaps and covering for one another (for example when a defender makes a run forward)
- Playing 4v4 with outstanding shape, but with fluid interchange of positions

The **goal keeper** should be used whenever appropriate to retain possession and switch the point of attack.

- Players should be comfortable passing the ball back to their keeper when it is appropriate.

Coaches are expected to implement **interchange of positions** in these age categories.



## Without Possession

Players are expected to understand the:

- Importance of timing, and angles of pressuring the ball carrier
- Concept of defensive support
  - The first player pressures the ball, the second player supports him/her
- Importance of man to man marking in and around the penalty area
- Importance of pressuring any opponent who is in a position to shoot

Players by U11 are also expected to know how to pressure a player/team in a certain direction.

The **goal keeper** supports the defence by sometimes playing “high” up the field.

- Communication is encouraged from the goal keeper at all times.

# Testing: U9-U11 Cobras

## Juggling Test

Players have one minute to complete as many consecutive juggles as possible in several juggling categories.

If a player starts juggling and gets six juggles, he/she uses the remainder of the minute to beat six. The best streak is recorded.

- **Open Juggling:** Any body part can be used.
- **Feet only:** Only feet can be used. If the ball bumps the player's chest or thigh in the process, he may continue, but doesn't count that touch towards the total.
- **Weak/Strong Leg only:** The thigh and foot of only the players' strong or weak leg.
- **Headers:** Only headers.

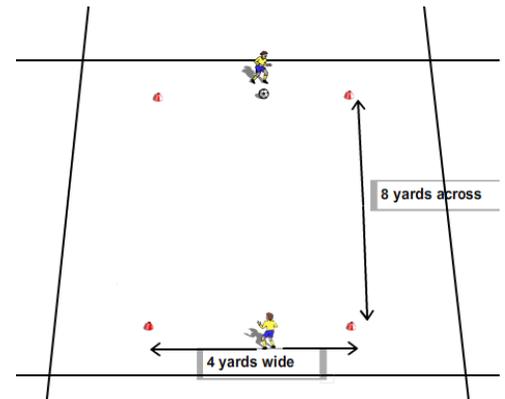
## Technical Standards Summary

Below are the standards and benchmarks collected over past years across the club.

### Juggling

The "standard" represents the average result of the stronger group in any given category. The standard is what is expected for each player to achieve.

The "strong" is what players could aim to achieve.



Boys - 2013						
	Juggling	Open	Feet Only	Weak Leg	Strong Leg	Headers
U9	Strong	20	15	9	20	6
	Standard	12	8	5	8	4
U10	Strong	30	20	10	25	6
	Standard	15	10	7	10	4
U11	Strong	50	25	12	30	12
	Standard	30	15	8	14	7

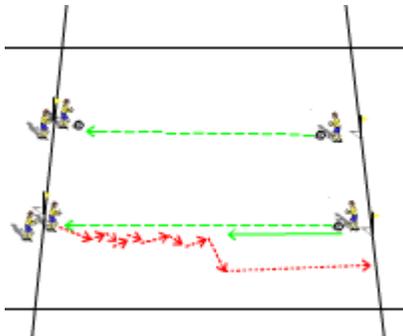


<b>Girls - 2013</b>						
<b>Juggling</b>		<b>Open</b>	<b>Feet Only</b>	<b>Weak Leg</b>	<b>Strong Leg</b>	<b>Headers</b>
U9	Strong	8	8	5	5	4
	Standard	5	4	3	4	3
U10	Strong	10	10	6	8	5
	Standard	7	6	4	5	4
U11	Strong	20	10	8	12	6
	Standard	10	7	6	7	5

# Appendix A - CUSC Learning to Train Session Plans

## Session 1: - 1v1 defending

1. 3v1, 4v1, 4v2 (5mins)
2. Everton Dribbling moves: scissor, double scissor, elastico (20mins)
  - a. Progress to Throw-ins



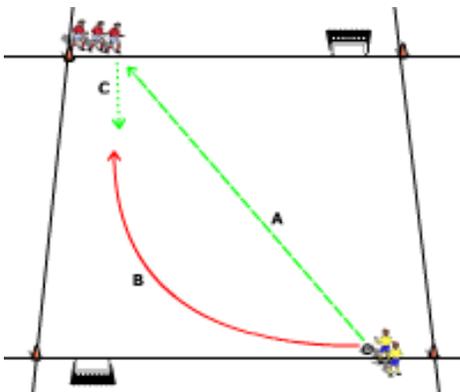
**Set up:** 2 lines roughly 10-15 yards apart. Ideally 3 per group, max 4

**Instructions:** First player passes the ball across and immediately follows to defend passively. Opposing player takes a positive first touch and works on various moves against to get by the defender. We will work on, scissors, roll-step over, roll-push, roll-stepover and ronaldinho, and then open it up and let them use any move.

**Coaching Points:**

2. SAQ – ladder work (10mins)

3. 1v1's diagonally (defending focus on speed and angle of pressure), attackers encouraged to be creative and use moves. Turn this into a tournament at the end. (25-30mins)



**Set up:** At least 2 players on each team (no more than 3) with a goal (about 3 m in width) in opposite corners of the grid.

**Instructions:** A -The ball is played across the grid to the attacking player.  
 B - Defender makes a curved run to shut down the attacker who controls the pass and tries to dribble past the player and score either 3 points by putting the ball in the goal or 1 point for dribbling past the endline. This encourages the defender to channel the attacker away from the goal, while still not allowing him/her to dribble across the end line with no opposition. When a goal is scored or the ball goes out, the players the ball is played from the opposite side and the players switch roles.

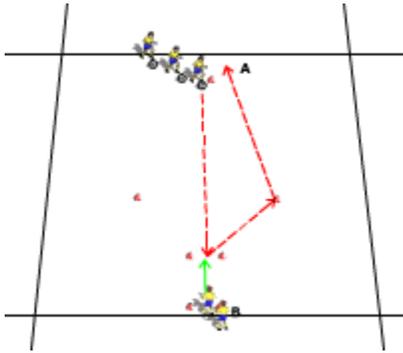
**Coaching Points:** Remind players to:

- curve their approach run to take away the most dangerous option as soon as possible.
- shut down the space as quickly as possible but slow down in time to stay in control
- have a proper distance of about 1 arms length from the attacker

4. Scrimmage with positions. Goals can be scored in the goal, as well as by beating a player using a move. (20mins)

**Session 2: 1v1**

1. 3v1, 4v1, 4v2 (5mins)
2. Inside/Outside of the foot receiving exercise (20 mins)



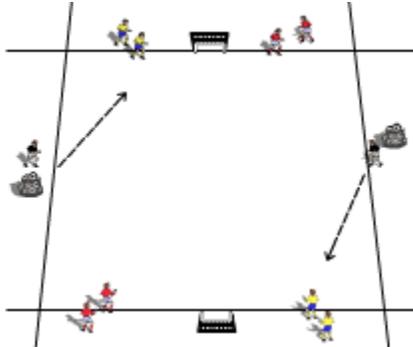
**Set up:** distance between the gate where the ball is received, and the starting cone where the ball starts is roughly 15 yards. Small gates are roughly 2 yards wide.

**Instructions:** Players work on receiving passes with positive touches of various parts of the foot. The ball is played from the first player "A" to player "B" who checks towards the ball and takes his first touch right at one of the cones in front of him. The player then dribbles back to line "A" and player "A" gets in line behind the next player "B". At all times, players should ask for the ball, arrive as the ball is arriving (so never wait for the ball), and take a positive first touch forward. Work on: Receiving inside of the foot, outside of the foot (both across the body and sideways on), outside-inside, inside-outside, small touch and a move before the cone (ie: scissor).

**Coaching Points:** Coach can be a passive defender behind B, to force proper timing.

- a. Progress to smaller first touch followed by moves
- b. Progress to throw-ins
- c. Progress to finishing on goal

3. SAQ – slalom sprints (5 mins)
4. Straight 1v1's – coach serves into players (20 mins)



**Set up:** field is roughly 25x20 yards, with two small goals at each end.

**Instructions:** 1v1 is played between 2 different pairs at a time (at least, if there are larger numbers you can even start a 3rd and 4th group).

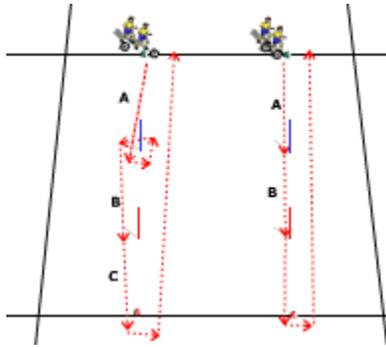
**Variations:**

- roll the ball purposely to one team so that they can clearly attack a defender
- have the players start with the ball so that it's even clearer.
- Various starting positions can be used
- use the coach as a neutral player to allow them to run off of you.
- build up to 2v1 with the stronger groups if possible (otherwise we will try that next time)

5. Scrimmage – points are scored by scoring on goal, or by pulling a move on someone and dribbling past them. (20 mins)

### Session 3: 2v2 defending

1. 3v1, 4v1, 4v2 (5mins)
2. ABC dribbling work (25 mins)



**Set up:** 3 10 yard gaps are created using cones and flags in a straight line. No more than 4 per line with a ball at each players' feet.

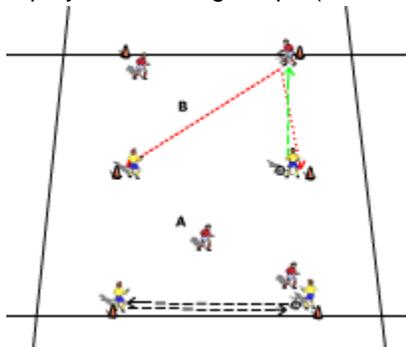
**Instructions:** Various technical drills are done in between each zone:

**Example:**

- 1 - A=foundation, B=roll with one foot, C= roll with other foot
- 2 - A= laces of both feet, touch every step, B= laces of one foot, C= laces of other foot (touch every step)
- 3 - A =inside outside of left, B= inside outside of right, C= foundation
- 4 - A = laces, touch every step, B= big touch, summersault, C=laces, touch every step
- 5 - various moves at each flag
- 6- touch at each flag and drop chest to ground and up quickly.

**Coaching Points:** Make it fun for the kids, but make sure that for the 20 minutes of the warm-up, they have a ball on their foot constantly, and are getting comfortable with various skills.

3. SAQ – ladder work (5 mins)
4. 2-player defending shape (15 mins)

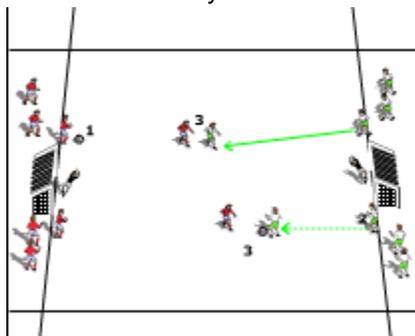


**Set up:** 10x10 grid. 4 players in each split into pairs.

**Instructions:** Initially (A) two players stay on the cones and pass the ball back and forth. The defenders shadow against them by pressuring and covering. COach the proper body position and timing of the runs. They do not try to win the ball at this point. B - Defenders start on their own cones, and play begins with a pass to the attacking pair. The defenders must now defend the 2 attackers and keep them from scoring by touching the cones with the ball.

**Coaching Points:** pressuring player takes away the line, covering player is ready to either cover if his team-mate gets beat, or to pressure if the ball is passed to the other attacker. Coach the defenders to be patient! Play for a minute or two continuous to encourage the defenders to stay patient while time runs out.

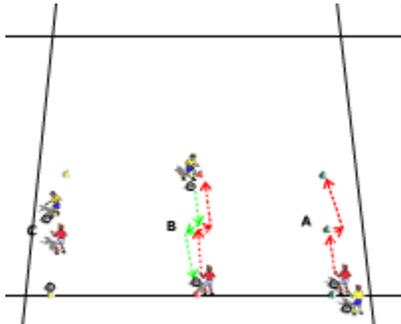
5. 2v2 live – play starts with defending team passing the ball to the attackers, and then immediately defending. (20-30 mins) You can turn this into a tournament if need be, to make the intensity rise.



6. Scrimmage with two defenders, and a long field (ideally full field 7v7, or with small numbers, play a 2-1-2 formation). Watch for defensive shape of the back 2. Also watch the defensive shape of the forwards and mids... one pressuring, and the other supporting. (20mins)

**Session 4: 2v2 and 3v2's**

1. 3v1, 4v1, 4v2 (5mins)
2. 1v1 moves at flags (or cones) – groups of 3 or 4... scissor, elastico, Ronaldo chop, pull back (20-30 mins)



**Set up:** dribbling patterns and moves progressing from static, to moving, to live defender.

**Instructions:** A - start with quick feet exercises to get a touch on the ball (foundation, roll/stop, pull push, outside inside) progress to scissor, step-over, push-push.

B - attempt some of the same moves while running at one another to work on timing of the moves

C - play 1v1 on a ball, attempting some of the moves.

**Coaching Points:**

3. SAQ (5 mins)
4. 3v2 continuous attack – first pressure has to be in a direction, either pushing the ball carrier towards the side line, or towards the supporting defender. (20 mins)



**Set up:** 3 or 4 teams of 3 players. each

**Instructions:** Continuous 3v2 attacks, with 2 defenders trying to stop 3 attackers. If the defenders win the ball, they can score on the 2 goals out wide. As soon as the play breaks down, 2 attackers stay to defend the next group of 3.

Progress to having a recovering defender to make it 3v3.

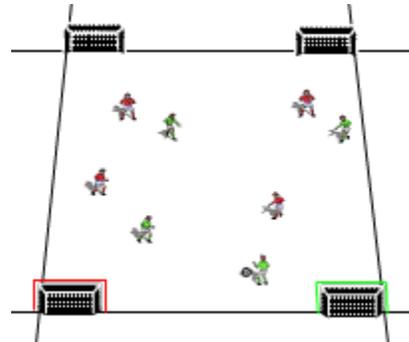
**Coaching Points:** same principles of defending as 2v2, but now players have to be smarter with their pressure, and have to communicate better.

- a. Depending on ability, progress to 3v3. One defender starts higher than the other two, again with pressure in a direction. (20 mins)
5. Scrimmage with positions – allow the defensive team to play out of the back, and then work on pressuring the team in one direction or another, and defending as a team. (20 mins)

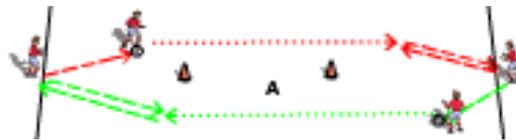
## Session 5: Turning - switching the point of attack – G.A.G.

1. 3v1, 4v1, 4v2 (5mins)

1. 4-goal game with each team defending two goals... encourage switching the point of attack, opening up when possible, turning and looking to finish. (20mins)



2. Four players switching warm-up. Can be done inside of the 2-touch passing grid – include dribbling moves. (20 mins)



**Set up:** 3 squares 10x10 each with a player at each cone and a ball with the server on each extreme corner.

**Instructions:** Progression 1 (A): Players open up with their first touch (using inside of foot), and dribble across to the opposite side where they do a quick 1-2 with the server and repeat.

Progression 2: After the working player turns and dribbles across, he/she plays to the server, and then runs back across to get the ball from the opposite server.

Progression 3 (B): After the players open up, they switch balls by laying their ball in the opposing workers path. Progress to throw ins so that players must turn a ball in the air. With strong teams you can progress to performing this with a single touch.

**Coaching Points:** Rotate every 40-70 seconds.

**Progressions:**

- Simple passes
- opening up with inside/outside of foot
- throw in to feet (open up)
- turn with chest
- turn with head

3. Scrimmage with wide zones – teams must get the ball into a wide zone before scoring... if you get the ball into both zones without losing possession in between, then that's a goal as well. (20mins)





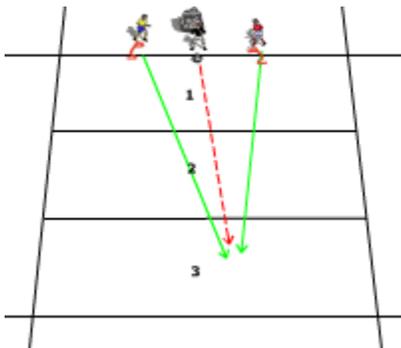
## Session 7: Shielding – playing back to goal

1. 3v1, 4v1, 4v2 (5mins)
2. Technical Olympics:



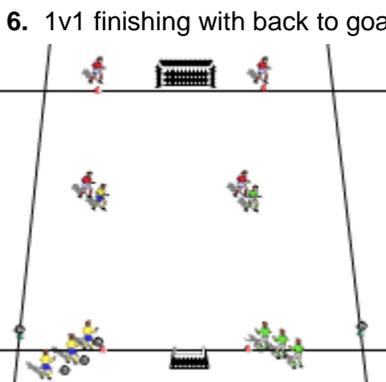
A: 10 x 1 touch passes in each square  
 B: 10 x 1 touch passes with laces  
 C: 3 volleys back to hands in the first 2, 3 volleys back and forth in the 3<sup>rd</sup>  
 D: Various juggling routines catered to the caliber of your players. This can literally be done with U8 players as well as national team players, but you will have to pick out the right skills to make it challenging, but to make success possible... that's what makes it fun.

4. Shielding battles in pairs (5-10 mins) – this is for SAQ as well as it's done at top speed.



**Set up:** 3 zones that are roughly 10 x 8 yards each. 2 lines of players with the balls in between them with the coach.  
**Instructions:** The coach plays a ball into one of the 3 zones, and the first two players race to get to the ball first. The first player to get to the ball becomes the attacker and competes to shield the ball against the defender. Points are scored by either holding the ball for 5 seconds in that square, or by turning the defender and dribbling out of the square back towards the coach. Once the rhythm is established, have the players performing various agility or strength exercises before they start (ie: jumps over a hurdle/ball, hops on 1 foot, burpies, etc), so that the defenders and attackers arrive at various times... that way the first player to the ball will have to decide whether to turn right away or rather to shield.  
**Coaching Points:** For stronger groups, also try bouncing the ball in.

5. **SAQ's – ball races:** two lines race to get a ball from the coach and bring it back to the next player in line, who brings it back to the coach, and returns for the next player to repeat again. Once all players have gone, the race is over. Start with carrying the ball in the hands, and progress to dribbling it with feet.



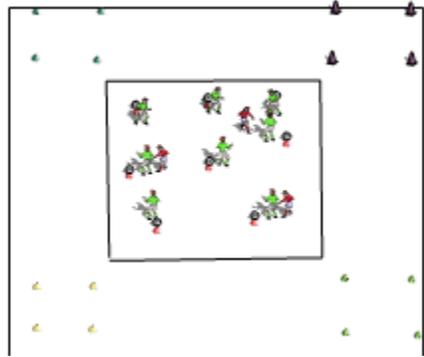
**Set up:** 3 teams of 4 players.  
**Instructions:** 1v1 with back to goal, building to 2v1 with a delay. For 1v1:  
 2 games are going on at once... first player in line passes the ball into his team mate, who tries to turn the defender and score. Defender is live right away, so the player must find room for himself, and not show the ball.  
 2v1: Ball is passed in, and that player joins the attack.  
**Progression:** the player who passed it in has to do an exercise to delay him from joining the attack. That way, the player either has to hold until support comes, or turn the player right away. You can play any of the exercises as a King of the court game, where the winning team continues to attack for the next round, while the losing team must defend.  
**Coaching Points:** Can I: spin and face the defender? slip behind the defender for a through ball? Is the defender so close that I can turn past him with 1 touch? take a touch sideways to get half a step for a shot?

7. Scrimmage – every out of bounds starts back with the coach who has all the balls at the half way line. Coach tries to put players into situations where they are required to shield the ball or play with their back to goal. (20 mins)

### Session 8: Shielding the ball

1. 3v1, 4v1, 4v2 (5mins)

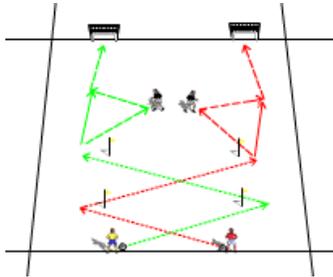
1. Dribbling in a square – commands, races to corners, shielding from coaches, or players. (20-30 mins)



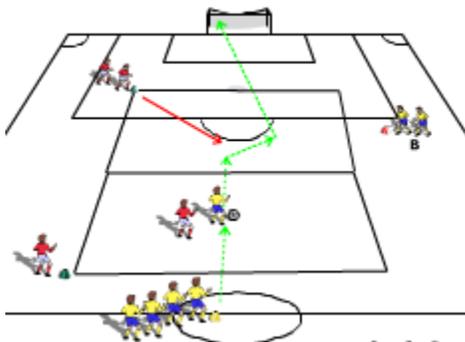
**Set up:** 20x20 yard grid, with 4 different colored squares that are 10 yards outside of each corner of the main grid.  
**Instructions:** Various exercises on dribbling and shielding and reaction. Players begin by simply dribbling around and doing various skills to get warm (dribbling in different ways, different moves, etc). Shielding is introduced by asking players to put their ball on top of a cone, and then having to shield it using their body from 1 or 2 defenders who are selected. If a player's ball is knocked off the cone, that player becomes the next defender, trying to get someone else's ball off. After 5 minutes or so, players begin moving around again, and this time they try to shield the ball while moving around. If the defender kicks their ball out of the square, they are either given an exercise to do, or become the defender.

**Note:** When coach calls out a colour, players race to that coloured square. Ask them to use different skills on their way to that square (i.e. you can even try juggling to the square etc.).

2. SAQ – slaloms ( include agility exercises – summersaults, rolls, spins, etc) (5-10 mins)



3. Pressure Gauntlet. Players must not “show the ball” even as they dribble, so they should dribble with the opposite foot from the defender, even if he/she is very close. (15-20 mins)

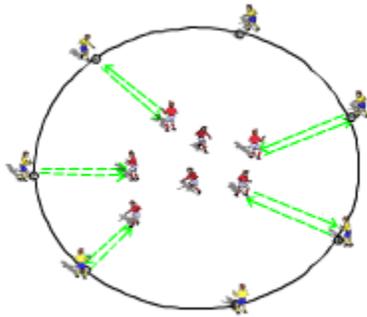


**Set up:** 2 large areas side by side... depending on age roughly 15 yards each. 2 equal teams  
**Instructions:** the exercise involves 2 different lvl scenarios, where the player must first quickly accelerate past a player without showing the ball, and then decide how to beat the second defender before finishing. The defenders cannot enter the grid until the attacker has done so, so the first attacker will be lagging behind a little, while the second defender should be able to challenge the attacker head on. The defenders rotate positions after each repetition. After a few minutes, switch the teams' roles.  
**Progression B** involves adding an attacker into the second grid with whom the attacker can combine. **Progression C** can introduce 2 attackers right from the start, so 2 separate 2v1 situations.  
**Coaching Points:** For today, focus on not showing the ball for the attacker, and defenders on pushing the player away from goal.

4. 3-goal game – Two wide, and one in the center that is worth two goals. Each team defends three goals and attacks three goals). (20-30 mins)

## Session 9: Give and go's

1. 3v1, 4v1, 4v2 (5mins)
2. Circle warm-up: include give and go's (20-25 mins)



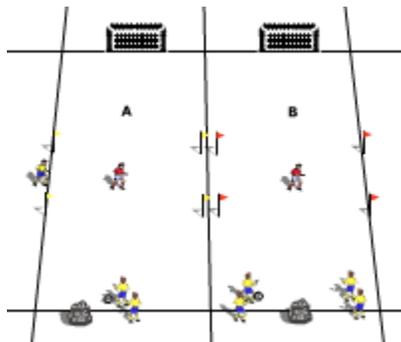
**Set up:** a circle is made with 7 players on the outsides with a ball and 7 on the inside with no ball.

**Instructions:** technical progression is performed where players run around the grid and look to perform the various skills with the players on the outside serving. Work for 1 minute intervals before switching. progression: passes (1-2), passes (1-2, ball starts with the players on the inside), volleys inside of the foot, two touches in air with feet, chest volley, thigh volley, headers, two headers, turn and turn back to pass, turn with chest and pass back.

**Coaching Points:** Perform the check and quality at speed, then you can rest for a few steps. In other words, show a change of pace when you want the ball and when you're performing the skill.

**Note:** The “give and go” variation means a player on the inside passes the ball out to a player on the outside, and the two players perform a give and go. The player who started on the inside takes the place of the player he combined with, and that player dribbles off to find a new team mate to combine with.

3. SAQ – ladder work (5 mins)
4. Give and go gauntlet (15-20 mins)
  - a. Start with a coach as the wall passer, and if need be, a flag as a “defender”
  - b. Build up to adding a real defender, and having a player as the wall passer
  - c. Allow the player in the square to eventually move all over (playing off the defenders shoulder)



**Set up:** Setup as for gauntlet, with just a single square to begin with.

**Instructions:** Focus is on give and go's to goal:

A - a neutral is placed on the sideline (eventually that player can be released to move freely about the square), players must dribble into the square and perform a 1-2 to get around the defender. If need be, add a coach as a second neutral, so that 2 options are available.

B - 2v1's right from the start, so that players must create some depth on their own.

C - 1v2's with a much larger grid, with 2 neutrals helping the 1 player

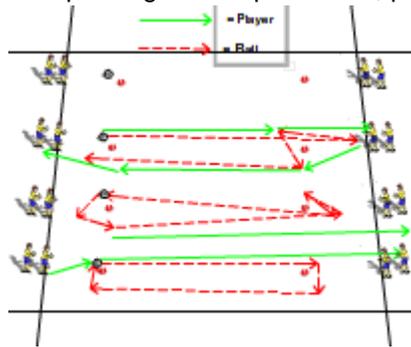
D - 2v2's with 2 neutrals.

**Coaching Points:** Beyond just proper technical execution of 1-2's encourage good decision making. Recognizing when to dribble and when to pass, deliberately drawing a defender away, not giving away your pass too early, and creativity, are all emphasized.

5. Game with 1 or 2 neutral midfielders (neutrals wear a different color, and always play with the attacking team). Goals are scored on goal, or by doing a give and go. With younger/weaker groups, you can introduce the neutral by using a coach as the neutral first, and then letting a player take over the role. (20-30 mins)

### Session 10: Give and go's

1. 3v1, 4v1, 4v2 (5mins)
2. Line passing warm-up – moves, passes, give and go's (watch the angles) – 20 mins



**Set up:** 2 cones 15-20 yards apart, with another cone or line a further 5-10 yards beyond each cone. Groups of 4 to 7.

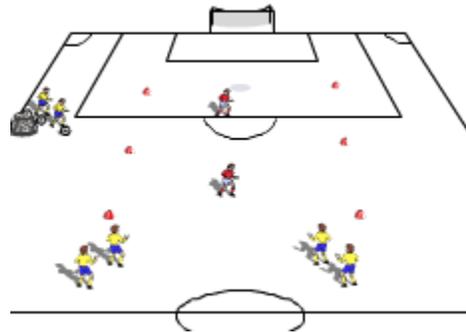
**Instructions:** Players perform technical passing drills and warm-up exercises.

**Progressions:**

- 1 - receive across the body with the inside of the foot
- 2 - receive with outside of the foot
- 3 - perform a move after receiving (matthews, pull back, are definitely to be tried)
- 4 - perform a 1-2 at every side.

**Coaching Points:** Perfect passes are crisp and on the ground, perfect touches allow us to play a perfect pass with our second touch, without skipping to far away from our foot.

3. SAQ ladder work (5 mins)
4. 2v1 Double Gauntlet: Once players are comfortable with the regular give and go gauntlet (this might not be in the same session), progress to 2v1 double gauntlet. (20 mins)



**Set up:** 2 large rectangles with a defender in each. teams of 2 ready to attack at the top, with one team of 2 serving balls in.

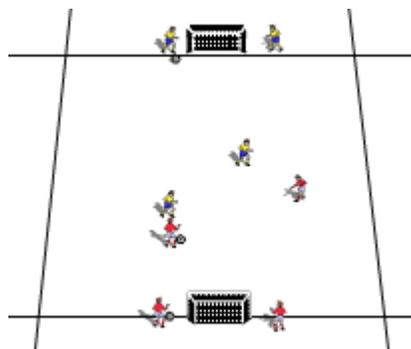
**Instructions:** A ball is served into one of the first to attackers, who then try to pass or dribble through the 2 defenders to produce a shooting opportunity.

**Progressions:**

- Vary the service
- Defender 2 must stay in his box
- Defenders can go anywhere
- one attacker starts at the top of the last square, back to goal with the last defender

**Coaching Points:** Look for: good angles created by supporting players, not passing for no reason (draw a defender first), be selfish when it's on, don't always dribble and move straight, but dribble and move across the box, don't crowd your team mate when you are the target player, remain patient.

5. 2v2 flying changes (20-30 mins)



**Set up:** 20 x 10 yard playing area with a goal on each end. Two teams are made with a minimum of 4 players on each team and a max of 6.

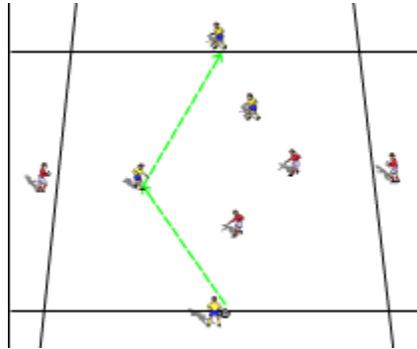
**Instructions:** the first two players of each team play 2v2 in the grid. When the Red team shoots and either scores or misses the target, the next two yellow players who are waiting behind their own goal immediately attack at full speed at the same 2 red players who just shot. The original defenders leave the grid and regroup behind their own goal again. Every time a shot goes past the endline, two new attackers come in.

**Coaching Points:** Watch the defensive shape of the defending pair. One is always pressing, one is always covering. Emphasize the quick transitions on attack, to maximize the attacking advantage and create 2 v 1's. Also emphasize the defensive transition and applying early pressure on the first attacker to slow the pair down.

6. Scrimmage – goals are given for a give and go, as well as for regular goals.(20 mins)

## Session 11: 4v4 (holding shape, and using support) (G.A.G)

1. 3v1, 4v1, 4v2 (5mins)
2. 2v2+2: Look for the 2 players in the middle to keep their width as a starting position, in order to create a diamond. (20-30 mins)



**Set up:** 20x20 grid, 2 teams, two neutrals from each team around the outsides facing each other.

**Instructions:** Players must possess the ball and score points by getting the ball from one neutral to the other successfully. Progress to having the neutral who receives the pass to come into the grid with the ball, and the player who passed to him replace him on the outside. You can also progressively reduce the touches for the neutral players.

**Coaching Points:** Attacking team:

- constant movement off the ball
- create space that you can come into
- be patient with the ball and use the neutrals to retain possession while you look for a way through.

Defensive team:

- protect the long pass forward which scores a point
- One pressures the ball when it's in the field, the other covers behind
- When a neutral has the ball, at least one player should be taking away the easy pass across the grid to the other neutral.

3. A – **Easier** variation – U9 and U10 (20-25 mins)



**Set up:** Setup a Y shape using cones. ANYwhere from 10-20 yards in distance depending on age and number of players.

**Instructions:** Player 1 passes to 2 who opens up and passes to 3 who controls and dribbles back to the start. Each player follows his pass to the next station. As soon as the ball gets to 3, player 4 starts and completes the same pattern towards the opposite side.

**Variations:**

- First player throws the ball in like a throw in, and various techniques are used to open up.
- players 2 and 5 receive the ball on the opposite side from where they will go, forcing them to turn across their body.
- a one two is performed at each cone
- ball is layed off by 2 or 5, and the next player is found with a long ball.

**Coaching Points:** This is a warm-up drill but should stress the technical intricacies of the various moves involved.

- B – **Advanced** variation – U11 or top U10: Diamond shaped finishing patterns – first player goes left, next player goes right. (20-25 mins)



**Set up:** Set-up in 2 diamonds finishing in opposing ends so that balls can re-load easily

**Instructions:** Passing, turning and finishing patterns modeled for a 4v4 match. If the first player (A) goes to the left, the next player in line will go to the right. Patterns as follows:

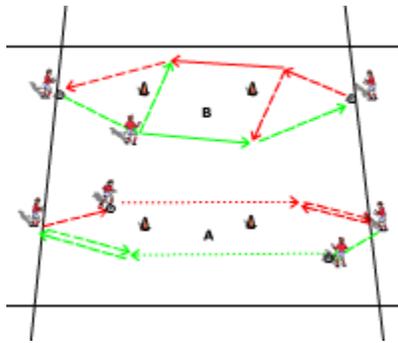
- A-B-C (various turns and finish) - turns will include across your body (popping it up as well), opening up on the spot - touch and finish, flick one way - go the other, shield and spin,
- A-B-A-C (progress to playing the ball in the air from A to C)
- A-B-A-C-B finish
- A-B-A-C-opposite B
- A-C-B finish
- A-C-B (both as a lay off, as well as an overlap)

**Coaching Points:** Working on various passing patterns and technical turns that are relevant in all 4v4 scenarios.

4. 4v4 – focus on shape, always having support, width, and depth. U11's should progress to interchanging positions fluidly, without losing shape completely.

**Session 12: Possession (holding shape)**

1. 3v1, 4v1, 4v2 (5mins)
2. Two players switching warm-up with interchanging balls in the middle... checking the shoulder – **don't progress** to B unless the players are comfortable with A. (20-25 mins)



**Set up:** 3 squares 10x10 each with a player at each cone and a ball with the server on each extreme corner.

**Instructions:** Progression 1 (A): Players open up with their first touch (using inside of foot), and dribble across to the opposite side where they do a quick 1-2 with the server and repeat.

Progression 2: After the working player turns and dribbles across, he/she plays to the server, and then runs back across to get the ball from the opposite server.

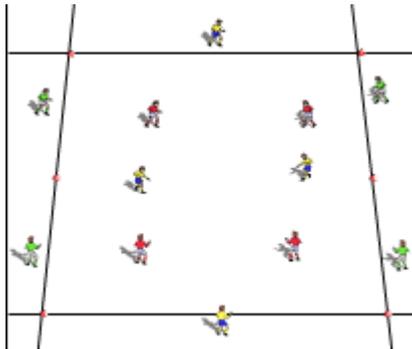
Progression 3 (B): After the players open up, they switch balls by laying their ball in the opposing workers path. Progress to throw ins so that players must turn a ball in the air. With strong teams you can progress to performing this with a single touch.

**Coaching Points:** Rotate every 40-70 seconds.

**Progressions:**

- Simple passes
- opening up with inside/outside of foot
- throw in to feet (open up)
- turn with chest
- turn with head
- switch ball with 1 touch

1. Reaction races: simple races where the players React to colors audibly, and then visually and race to the appropriately colored cone or gate (5 mins)
2. A – 3-team possession (**Beginner** – U9) (20-30 mins)

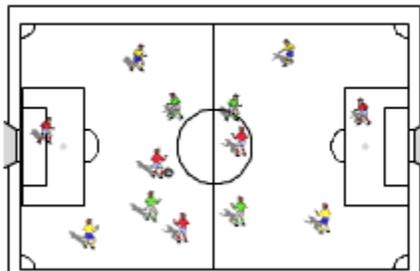


**Set up:** 6 cones in a rectangle, and 3 equal teams, ideally of 4 players each.

**Instructions:** one team of 4 defends against the other 8, who only have 2 players that are playing as central players. If the defenders win the ball they can score on goal. Defenders defend for 2-3 minutes, with the attacking team counting the number of passes they can make.

**Coaching Points:** Look for playing the ball to the proper foot, the central players always moving and showing for the ball (making their space early). Defenders work together and transition quickly if they win the ball.

**B – 3-team possession (Advanced – U10-U11).** Defending team scores on goals, two teams work together to make the best sequence of passing. Focus is first on **SPREADING OUT... HEELS ON THE TOUCH LINE**, with one CM who is looking to sit in the “pocket” behind the first pressure. (20-30 mins)



**Set up:** 3 equal teams in an appropriate grid for possession

**Instructions:** 2 teams possess the ball against a third defending team. Progressions:

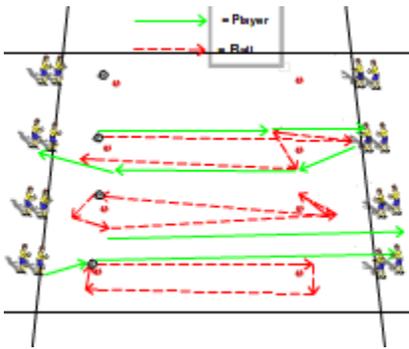
- 1 - team defends for a set amount of time 2-3 minutes depending on age and fitness level. The best series of passes wins.
- 2 - Defending team scores on the goals when they are able to win the ball
- 3 - on the fly... whoever loses it, defends immediately... this is done best when the defending team holds pinneys in their hands and drops them on the spot as soon as they win the ball.

**Coaching Points:** Work on spreading out quickly to possess, and collapsing when the ball is lost...defending starts immediately after losing the ball... the best chance to win it back is right after losing it.

3. Scrimmage – holding shape, must find the midfielder before scoring.

## Session 13: transition - Possession to attack

- 3v1, 4v1, 4v2 (5mins)
- Line warm-up: moves at cones, with switching balls in the middle (groups of 4-5 players)
  - Simple progression (U9-U10) – as in session 10 (20-30 mins)



**Set up:** 2 cones 15-20 yards apart, with another cone or line a further 5-10 yards beyond each cone. Groups of 4 to 7.

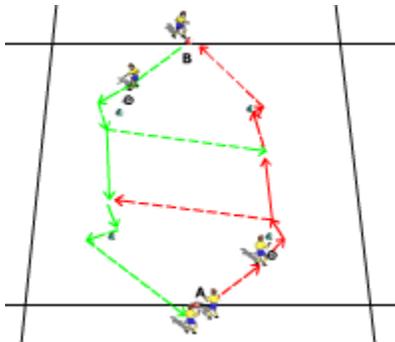
**Instructions:** Players perform technical passing drills and warm-up exercises.

**Progressions:**

- 1 - receive across the body with the inside of the foot
- 2 - receive with outside of the foot
- 3 - perform a move after receiving (matthews, pull back, are definitely to be tried)
- 4 - perform a 1-2 at every side.

**Coaching Points:** Perfect passes are crisp and on the ground, perfect touches allow us to play a perfect pass with our second touch, without skipping to far away from our foot.

- Advanced (U10-U11) – add two moves in a row and exchange balls in the middle (20-30 mins)



**Set up:** cones A and B are 20-25 yards apart. 2 balls are needed and groups of 4-6 players.

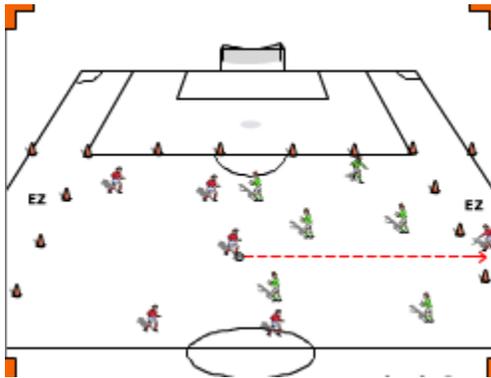
**Instructions:** Technical exercises where moves are done at 2 cones in succession. So both A and B start at the same time, and work on a specific move done at the 2 cones, before passing the ball to the next player in the opposite line. Progress to exchanging passes after moves.

**Progressions:**

- 1 - simple moves at cones and then pass the ball on (scissor, step over, matthews, elastico, etc)
- 2 - move at the first cone, and then exchange balls in the middle
- 3 - move at the first cone, exchanges balls and pull a move at the second cone with the new ball
- 4 - The first player up starts at the first cone with his back to goal. the player receives a pass from the next player in line, turns, and do the same as the above progressions.

**Coaching Points:**

- SAQ slaloms (5 mins)
- End zone possession (20-30 m)



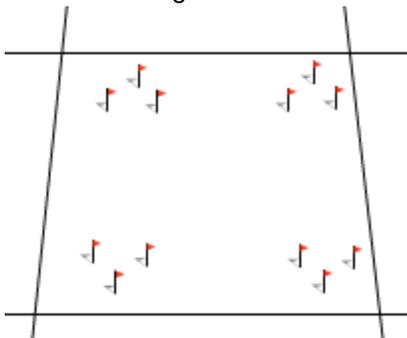
**Set up:** A large grid is made, the width of the field. Ideally, 2 teams of 7 are made.

**Instructions:** Possession is played where 3 passes need to be made before a point can be scored by either running or passing into an endzone. If you can retain possession after scoring, you're free to try and score on the other side.

**Coaching Points:** Recognize which side we have numbers on in order to attack. If need be, add a neutral player on either side line to encourage players to use a safe option.

**Note:** For weaker groups (U9-U10), start with a 2v2+2 variation, where a player from each team is designated in the end zones, and cannot be tackled. This will guarantee a degree of "spreading out", and will force teams to always have support and depth. Eventually however, teach the kids to do this without being forced.

- Triangle possession – four triangles, possession with goals scored by dribbling through the triangles.



**Set up:** 3 triangles (3x3) in a grid. two equal teams.

**Instructions:** Teams play possession, and score by dribbling the ball through one of the opposing team's triangles (you can't score twice in a row on the same triangle).

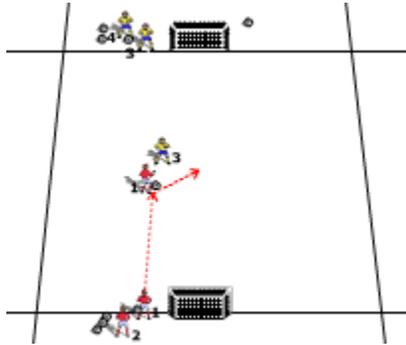
**Progressions:**

- score by passing through the triangle or dribbling through it
- score by dribbling through any of the 4 triangles

**Coaching Points:** Focus during this session is on dribbling and attackign at speed, so encourage kids to attack and take players on to break through the triangle. Make the triangles big enough so that a single defender or even two do not completely discourage an attacker from going at that triangle. For stronger groups, consider attacking all 4 triangles so that it becomes even more appealing to dribble at players and score goals.

**Session 14: Transition attack to defense**

1. 3v1, 4v1, 4v2 (5mins)
2. Technical Testing (either 20-30 mins, or do as station format with the next exercises)
3. SAQ races (5 mins)
4. 1v1 flying changes (20 mins)

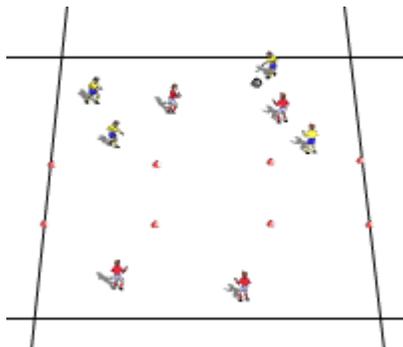


**Set up:** A playing field of 15x10 yards with a small goal on either end. For added fitness this grid can be made much larger, so that players are working very hard to cover the distance, but are always in a game situation.

**Instructions:** Player 1 attacks player 3 in a 1v1 situation. If player 1 shoots and scores or misses (Ball goes over the endline), player 4 (the next player from yellow) attacks with a new ball, player 1 continues and is now defending. Player 3 exits and gets back in his line. Sidelines are out, player may dribble in.

**Coaching Points:** Quick transitions! Stay aware if you're on the sideline so that you can surprise the defender and attack from a new angle.

8. CSA Tennis – winning the ball clean (20 mins)
  - a. Look for players to check their shoulder, and whenever possible to open up with their first touch and look to switch the ball from side to side.
  - b. Progress to making 3-4 passes and then dribbling across to score.



**Set up:** 2 grids roughly 5-10 yards apart.

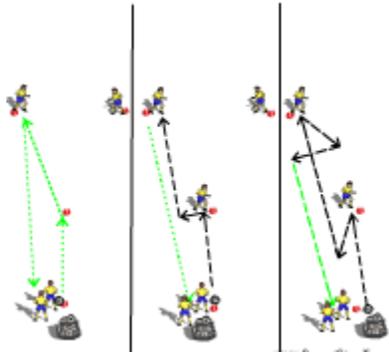
**Instructions:** 2 equal teams, one in each grid. 2 defenders are sent in against 4 or 5 attackers to try and win the ball. Points are scored in 2 ways, either by attaining a pre-determined amount of passes, or by winning the ball as the 2 defenders, and making a pass back into your team mates.

**Coaching Points:** Encourage clean winning of the ball, and of course the concepts of possession. Adjust numbers accordingly playing 6v3 or 7v4 or whatever is necessary to make it challenging and still possible to succeed.

5. Scrimmage (20-30 mins)

## Session 15: Finishing and attacking at speed

1. 3v1, 4v1, 4v2 (5mins)
2. SAQ ladders (5 mins)
3. Y-pattern warm-up (20 mins)



**Set up:** 4 cones placed in a Y pattern, roughly 15 yards apart each.

**Instructions:** Dribbling to passing combinations performed in this pattern.

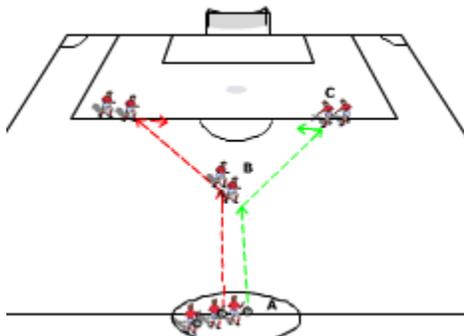
- 1- players alternate dribbling and performing moves to the right and left before passing the ball off to the player at the top of the Y
- 2 - on player starts in the center of the Y, players pass the ball into the center, where different turns are performed and the ball is passed on to the next player who dribbles back.
- 3 - a 1-2 is performed at the center of the Y and eventually with the player at the top of the Y as well.

**Progressions:**

- ball is thrown into the feet at the center
- ball is laid off by center player who chips the ball into the next player
- ball is thrown into chest, thigh, head, etc.
- top of the Y, players turn and finish on goal

**Coaching Points:** technical progression with quick and sharp passes.

4. Progress to Y-pattern finishing (10-15 mins)



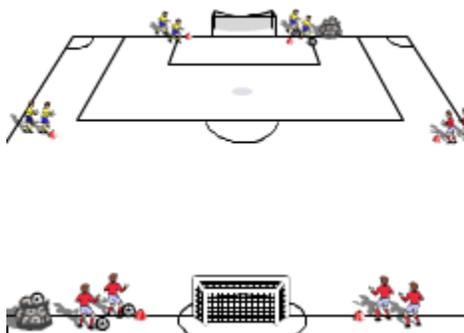
**Set up:** a large Y shape is setup with at least 10 yards between each cone. 2 players are at each cone with excess players at the bottom of the Y with a ball each

**Instructions:** Several Progressions are done, ending with a shot on goal.

- 1- A to B who turns and plays C, who turns and finishes (everyone follows pass)
- 2- A to B who turns and plays C, laid off for B to finish (everyone follows pass except for shooter who becomes C)
- 3 - A to B back to A to C
- 4 - all of the previous progressions with some of the passes played in the air
- 5 - A starts the play with a throw in instead of an easy pass.

**Coaching Points:** Proper passing and solid touches through the progressions. Proper finishing technique at end. Force players to attack the shot at full speed instead of waiting for the perfect bounce.

5. 3v3 flying changes (20 mins)



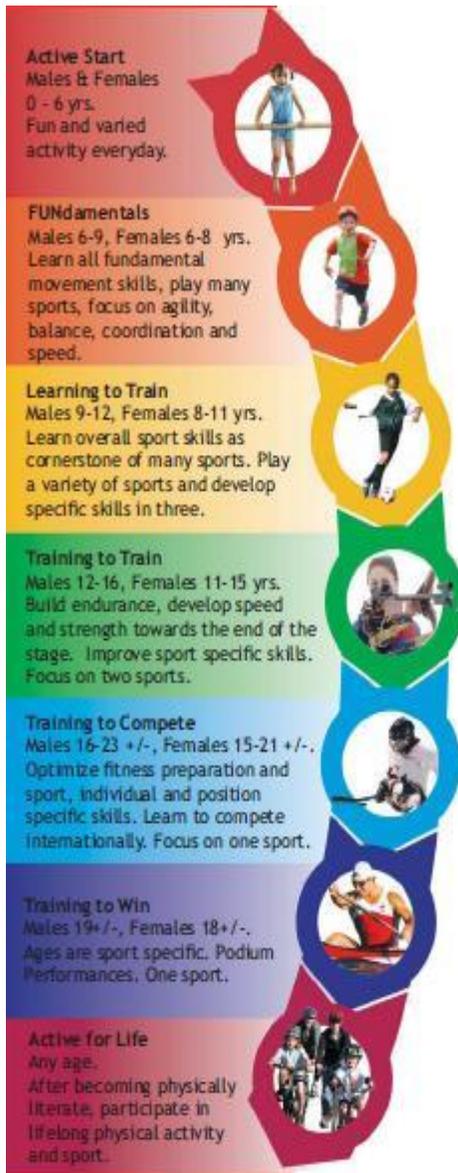
**Set up:** 2 lines beside the posts, and one more line on the side line at half

**Instructions:** 3v3 flying changes, but one of the players begins on the half way line so that depth is established immediately and transitions have to be much sharper.

**Coaching Points:** Look for the early ball to the wide player to gain ground. Defensively, early pressure is important to discourage an easy pass forward that eliminates to players.

6. Scrimmage (20 mins)

## Appendix B – Learning to Train (from LTPD)



Children begin to identify with famous players and successful teams, and they want to learn imaginative skills. **Skill demonstration** is very important, and the players learn best by “doing.” Players move from being self-centered to self-critical, and they have a high arousal level during basic skills training. This is also an important time to teach basic principles of play and to establish a training ethic and discipline. Repetitions are important to develop technical excellence, but creating a fun and challenging environment is still essential for stimulating learning.

This stage is an optimal window for trainability of speed, flexibility and skills, and physical training should focus on developing these qualities. Technical training focuses on building a greater repertoire of soccer related movements within the context of basic soccer games.

Tactical training is designed to develop field awareness and encourage decision making. Players should be taught simple combinations, marking, and running into space. Mental aspects of training are intended to develop each player’s intrinsic motivation through fun and enjoyment that foster a desire to play.

All players play equal time and try all team positions, including goalkeeping, and the training to competition ratio should be 2 to 3 training sessions for every game. Other sports continue to play a role, both for variety and cross-training, but the balance now begins to shift firmly in favor of soccer. (from LTPD)

**For a Full PDF version of the entire Long Term Player Development Program, please visit:**

[http://www.canadasoccer.com/wellness/Wellness\\_CoupeDuMonde.asp](http://www.canadasoccer.com/wellness/Wellness_CoupeDuMonde.asp)